

**UNIT PROCEDURE**

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|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
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**I. DEFINITIONS**

- A. GovQA – the name of the online portal used for receiving, tracking, and filling public records requests.
- B. JSO public website – the official JSO website, located at [www.JaxSheriff.org](http://www.JaxSheriff.org), designed to inform the public on law enforcement incidents, JSO investigations, events, and safety tips.
- C. Media – members of news organizations, as defined by Florida State Statute, with employer-issued identification.
- D. Media Advisory – an e-mail broadcast of information regarding an upcoming press conference or event.
- E. News Release – an e-mail broadcast of investigative information such as the identities of wanted persons or victims.
- F. PIO – public information officer.
- G. PRR – public records request.

**II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. Public Information Officers (PIOs) - responsible for facilitating the release of information to the public and news media; working with the news media on requests, inquiries, and coverage of news worthy events and activities; and carry out the public communication of the agency, its programs, and personnel. PIOs serve as a point of contact for all news media inquiries and requests for creation, production, and public dissemination of information by internal and external customers. The PIOs report directly to the Commanding Officer of the Public Information Unit. The PIOs perform the following tasks on a daily basis: [CFA 32.05]
1. Serve as the Public Information Officer for events or incidents when requested by the incident commander.
  2. Receive and respond to inquiries from the media regarding incidents and investigations.
  3. Enter all public records requests (PRRs), received by e-mail or phone, into the JSO on-line portal (GovQA).
  4. Assist the Public Records Unit by filling all PRRs in GovQA that meet all of the following criteria:
    - a. Were submitted by a member of the media;
    - b. Take less than thirty (30) minutes to fill; and
    - c. Are requests for information to which the PIOs have immediate access.
  5. Provide timely and accurate information on wanted persons for use on local news programs and print media, as well as the JSO public website and social media platforms
  6. Monitor Crime Stoppers, Cop Logic, the JSO Crime Tips email account, and all social media platforms for crime tips. Distribute those tips to the appropriate unit or investigator.
  7. Coordinate, develop, and issue News Releases at the request of the Sheriff, the Sheriff's staff, or an investigative unit.
  8. Coordinate, develop, and issue Media Advisories at the request of the Sheriff, the Sheriff's staff, or an investigative unit.
  9. Oversee the release of information on all official JSO social media platforms and the Newsroom section of the JSO public website.
  10. Ensure that arrests connected to an active criminal investigation or arrests of individuals that qualify for a statutory exemption are withheld from JSO public website. Ensure that calls-for-service containing critical active criminal information are withheld from the JSO public website.

- B. Commanding Officer of the Public Information Unit – responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the unit, as well as fostering positive relationships with the media in order to maximize agency transparency without compromising active investigations or public safety.

### **III. PROCEDURES**

#### **A. Setting Up Press Conferences**

1. Coordinate with the unit or staff member that requested the press conference.
2. Construct packets with pertinent material for dissemination at the press conference.
3. Craft and disseminate Media Advisories via email to the current list of News Release subscribers no later than thirty (30) minutes before the press conference.
4. Notify PMB security guards if the press conference is being conducted inside the PMB.
5. Set up either the Drill Hall or the Sheriff's Press Briefing Room (podium, chairs, props, recording device, etc.), depending upon the request.
6. Escort media personnel in and out of the secure areas.
7. Upload video of the press conference (if it was not live-streamed) and complete a synopsis for an official release on the Newsroom and social media platforms.

#### **B. Issuing News Releases**

Upon receiving a request for a news release from the Sheriff, the Sheriff's staff, or the commanding officer of an investigative unit, the PIOs will:

- a. Gather information and details to create release.
- b. Coordinate with investigating unit so the release of any details will not hinder further investigative efforts.
- c. Send news release to media.
- d. If applicable, post a story to the JSO website.
- e. If applicable, make social media post and aggregate on all social media platforms.

#### **C. Wheel of Justice Program**

1. The Wheel of Justice is a segment of a televised news show that is recorded or broadcast live weekly (typically on Wednesdays) at the WJXT (Channel 4) studio.

2. Using the eWarrants system, verify that the eight (8) wanted persons displayed on the program still have active warrants.
3. Replace any captured suspects with new wanted suspects using recommendations from the Investigations Division or by searching the CAU Warrants site.
4. Arrive at the studio to conduct the live (or taped) broadcast at the designated time.

D. Justice Coalition

1. The Justice Coalition is a newsletter that contains a section on wanted persons.
2. Using the eWarrants system, verify that the thirty (30) wanted persons displayed in the newsletter still have active warrants.
3. Replace any captured suspects with new wanted suspects using recommendations from the Investigations Division or by searching the CAU Warrants site.
4. Forward the new list of wanted persons to the Justice Coalition via e-mail by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

E. Filling PRRs Submitted by the Media

1. On a daily basis, the PIOs will monitor GovQA for any PRR that was submitted by the media, as indicated by the "Media" checkbox.
2. Fill any media PRR for information that is readily accessible and will take less than thirty (30) minutes to complete.
3. Route the remaining media requests to the Public Records Unit.

F. Monitoring of Social Media Platforms [CFA 32.05]

1. On a daily basis, the PIOs will monitor all official JSO accounts for posts that contain helpful information regarding a criminal investigation (a crime tip).
2. Copy the information and route it to the appropriate unit or investigator.
3. When appropriate, inform citizens that JSO will follow up on the information provided or answer citizens' questions when appropriate.

**IV. CASH HANDLING PROCEDURES**

n/a

## **V. EVIDENCE HANDLING PROCEDURES**

When actual evidence is displayed at a press conference, only the relevant investigative unit will handle the evidence. PIOs will not become part of the chain-of-custody for any of this evidence.

## **VI. SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE**

The PIOs will be responsible and accountable for the proper procurement, maintenance, and storage of the following specialized equipment used in the course of their duties:

1. Apple iPad Tablet
2. Smart Phone
3. Tripod with Tablet Holder
4. Mic Stand
5. Easel
6. Desktop with Scanner

## **VII. VEHICLES (SPECIALIZED AND/OR POOL)**

n/a

## **VIII. BUILDING / OFFICE SECURITY**

The PIO Office and specialized equipment will be secured when not in use.

## **IX. UNIT MEETINGS**

The Commanding Officer of the Public Information Unit and the PIOs will meet on an as-needed basis.

## **X. UNIFORM / DRESS CODE**

PIOs are afforded discretion when selecting their uniform for a given day.

## **XI. UNIT REPORTS (INTERNAL & EXTERNAL)**

n/a

## **XII. RECORD RETENTION**

The PIOs will ensure that all social media records are being captured by the JSO-approved vendor (Archive Social) in order to comply with all relevant public records laws.

## **XIII. MEMBER SELECTION**

The Commanding Officer of the Public Information Unit will be responsible for member selection, subject to the final approval of the Sheriff and Undersheriff.

## **XIV. MEMBER TRAINING**

In addition to on-the-job training by seasoned members, new members of the unit will be required to attend PIO training courses, as approved by the Commanding Officer of the Public Information Unit.

References: